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HABS No. MO-1864

Mineral Hall  
(Bruner, Roland E., House) (Ownby House)  
4340 Oak Street  
Kansas City  
Jackson County  
Missouri

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MINERAL HALL  
(Roland E. Bruner House)  
(Ownby House)

HABS No. MO-1864

Location: 4340 Oak Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Significance: Mineral Hall represents the numerous ornate houses built in the South Hyde Park area of Kansas City, Missouri, around 1900. Moreover, it is an important extant example of the work of Kansas City architect Louis S. Curtiss. The builder and occupant both played a role in the business development of the area.

Description: The house has an unusual mixture of Prairie School and Art Nouveau elements. Uncoursed limestone blocks form the foundations. The principal building material of the walls of the house is Jackson County oolitic limestone. Rough blocks in a random pattern make up the exterior walls, and blocks form voussoirs over doors and windows. The front door contains geometric tiling in the section directly under the arch. The door itself displays the curvilinear and floral motifs popular with Art Nouveau designers.

On the attic level of the east (front) facade, a band of three Prairie Style clerestory windows extends along the facade above the eaves. The center sections between the small double-sash windows originally contained leaded-glass in geometric patterns. Between and above these windows are two dormers reminiscent of the Second Empire style. These dormers consist of oval, single-paned windows in scrolled cartouche metal frames. Some decorative detailing on the front of the house has been removed. Metal brackets support the eaves of the house. The hipped roof is covered with red-tiles.

The west facade contains a single-story wing with windows at grade level. Directly above is a tar-surfaced sundeck enclosed by an x-shaped wooden balustrade between square stone piers. Directly above the projecting wing are paired art glass windows crowned by a clay pediment similar to the one on the east facade. On the attic level of the west facade is a hip dormer, also with a roof of red tile.

The north facade contains a single-story semi-octangular addition, made of uncoursed stone. Three of the five windows in this projection contain oval stained glass, whose pattern repeats in the glass-doored cases which line the perimeter of the space.

History:

Kansas City architect Louis S. Curtiss designed "Mineral Hall." Construction lasted fourteen months from 1903 to 1904 and cost approximately 25,000 dollars.

William A. Rule commissioned the house to occupy the southern corner of his estate. His stated purpose was "to maintain the quality of the neighborhood." However, he never intended to--nor did he--ever live in the house. In 1905 Roland E. Bruner purchased the structure. Due to his interest in and connections with the mining industry, he dubbed it "Mineral Hall." In 1905 he added the semi-octagonal wing on the north facade to house part of his mineral collection. Curtiss designed this wing as well. Various minerals are embedded in the mortar of the interior walls of this room.

Currently the house serves as the Admissions Office for the Kansas City Art Institute.

Sources:

National Register nomination form, "Roland E. Bruner House," compiled by Edward J. Mischczuk, February 1, 1975

Telephone conversation with representative of the Kansas City Art Institute, July 7, 1988

Historian:

Robert Buerglener, HABS, July 7, 1988

ADDENDUM TO  
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